



A copy of the Daily Press from this office was sent on Thursday morning at 10:30, and the last message left the office at 10:30.

## The Daily Press

HONGKONG, JUNE 9TH, 1871

It will be recollect that in the Convention for the revision of the Treaty to which Sir Rutherford Alcock agreed, it was stipulated that there should be arrangements by which vessels could clear from the Treaty ports to subsidiary ports on the Coast, but the same privilege was not allowed to vessels clearing from Hongkong. This subsequently became one of the chief grounds of objection on the part of the Community of Hongkong to the ratification of the Convention, because it was justly apprehended that it could not fail to result in the withdrawal of the larger portion of the Coast trade from the Colony, as the likelihood would be that the new ports opened would be better suited for the Coast trade than the ports at present thrown open by Treaty. The reply of Sir Rutherford Alcock to the objection made was: "You cannot enjoy the advantages of a Colony and those of a Treaty port at the same time"—an answer not very palatable, but still not without a considerable amount of truth in it. The fact of Hongkong being free from the duties which are collected at all the Treaty ports makes the Chinese authorities unwilling to grant any facilities of trade to it. Originally it was understood that arrangements would be made for the collection of the same dues and duties in Hongkong, as were formerly collected at Canton, but the provision was afterward withdrawn. At the same time, the natives may justly feel that through the peculiar position occupied by the Island, they are defrauded of a large amount of revenue, and this feeling forms a very strong inducement to throw obstacles in the way of the Trade, and to do all that is in their power to diminish the influence of a port which is a source of so much vexation and loss. No doubt the proposal to exclude Hongkong from the proposed new facilities at the subsidiary ports was designed on the part of the Chinese as a blow at this Colony, and Sir Rutherford Alcock was much to blame for accepting a Convention containing provisions which, if carried out, must have had so detrimental an influence upon a possession of the country which he represented. For his apathy in this respect no excuse can be pleaded; but it may still be a question whether, had he taken the trouble to give the matter proper consideration, a scheme could not have been devised by which Hongkong could be admitted to the same privileges as the Treaty ports, and yet no injury be done to its trading interests.

This practical view seems never to have been so much as thought of by the Minister, who thus laid himself in the absurdity of concluding his negotiations without any reference to the necessities of the only British possession in contiguity with China. In this he was, perhaps influenced in some measure by the peculiar jealousy which has always subsisted between the Colonial and the Foreign Offices; but whatever his motive, there can be no doubt that by omitting to make the arrangements respecting the trade of Hongkong an integral part of the Convention, he not only made a great omission, but probably lost an admirable opportunity for the settlement of a much vexed question. Being taken thus by surprise, the Community of Hongkong were naturally suspicious of the whole arrangement, and would listen to no ideas of compromise. Still it may be asked whether it might not be advantageous, now that the postponement of the ratifications of Sir Rutherford Alcock's Convention affords the opportunity, carefully to reconsider the whole question, and ascertain whether, taking a large view of the subject it might not after all be best for Hongkong to meet the Chinese Authorities half way in the matter. The idea is prevalent that the property of Hongkong depends upon her being free from the liability to pay any duties to the Chinese Government. Whatever truth might be found in the view aforesaid, there is no question that Hongkong is not free from having to pay duties at the present day. It is notorious that a cordon of cruisers surrounds the Island, and that excise duties are levied right and left in an irregular way. It was only the other day that Capt. Taring's office was discovered actually in the Colony, and yet people stood out against the imposition of taxes in a recognised form as if it would be a great retrogression from the state of affairs at present existing. The probability is that, were arrangements made for Hongkong to contribute to the Chinese Government the same duties that are paid at the Treaty ports, the arrangement would be found so far from detrimental to the local interests of the Colony, to be one which would greatly increase its prosperity. At all events, it is worth the earnest consideration of all well-wishers of this place whether some means could not be devised to come to a fair arrangement with the Chinese Authorities, by means of which the consideration of paying the like duties as are paid at the Treaty ports, Hongkong would be freed from the anomalous state of things now existing, and a system of regular duties substituted for the irregular and vexatious levies which, despite every effort of the local government, notoriously continue to be made.

The Straits Times state that the China Telegraph Company have decided on laying a cable to Saigon. The cable for this work is on board the steamer *Agnes*, and the laying will be proceeded with as early as practicable.

Notwithstanding that yesterday was mainly the Eureka Troop's half a very fair attendance at their performances, which was quite up to the standard of the previous evening. Mr. Smith and Mr. Soper in the tests were wonderfully good, and the banjo was again superb. Mr. Singer's instrumental and vocal performances were as usual very well received, as were also the comic songs, which were sung with great spirit and thoroughly in character.

THE TREES IN THE COLONY.—  
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY PRESS."

Sir.—Hongkong, our Island, is fragrant with trees. Some few years ago, one could scarcely find a spot in it in favour. The papers at home wrote against it as a host ignorant, and one might almost say, feebly minded; correspondents emptied their vials of wrath upon the ticklish spot, and nothing was too bad that might not be said against this "Giant of the East." Regiments who were ordered bitter to the point to that they were compelled to sell out at a price of exchange to any place, were minded of unfeeling or savage, provided that could escape being sent to Hongkong! But

those who were not so fortunate, and were doomed to pass their time here, invariably on their arrival acknowledged themselves agreeably surprised, and some condescended to confess it was not so bad a place after all.

Whatever Hongkong might have been fourteen or twenty years ago, it has certainly never deserved within the last eight years the aspersions cast upon it. It has improved every day, and during the time it has resided here, not only the *Admiral* and *Fox*, but have fast obliged to remain stationary, they have wisely tried to soften their lot by taking some little interest in their Island Home. Gardens have bloomed and vegetables flourished where before was waste, uncultivated land; our Government gardens have been laid out, our Parade Ground improved, roads extended and levelled, and above all the hill sides, and given a fresh home to their workers. Many and many a *Admiral* resident who has returned after a absence of a few years, has been amazed at the improvement of Hongkong; in this respect, and from one who has been absent only two months during the wet season, when verdure grows as if by magic, I have heard exclamation of delight at the newly-unfolded beauty of our shrubs and trees. Our glimpse of former days, Indian village, plains, and objects of great interest to us foreign residents, and now, not even upon their importance, in a sanitary point of view, as our Colonial Surgeon, in his yearly report, is constantly impressing upon us the necessity of foliage for the greater good of health.

Then it is a pity that these getted objects, reminiscent of our English and Colonial Homes—of wood, stone, ivy, and trees, have been sold by us to a grasping, should be daily destroyed by an *Admiral* (I am sorry to say in *formal form*)! Is it right that British women should be allowed constantly to prowl about our hills and roads? *Admiral* is now, however, in the hands of the police, for the evident purpose of cutting bushes and abiding them, and destroying them. The *Admiral* and *Fox* have been sold to the *Admiral* and *Fox*, and almost every individual has spent so much time and money? To me it is inconceivable that this *Admiral* infamy has been continued so many years. On one hand we plant and send to Australia for her gun-trees; to Norfolk Island for her saw-pines; to the mainland for coco-nut palms, and at each returning we send coolies hired by dozen, to uproot and burn up the *Admiral* and *Fox*, and *Admiral* and *Fox*—whilst *Agnes* and *Malacca* are almost dead, and the *Agnes* goes, the *Admiral* and *Fox* drift even worse than on the last occasion. The *Yacht* Club took advantage of the holiday, and held a race for a cup, value £75, presented by the *Admiral* and *Fox*, and almost dead, and the *Agnes* goes, the *Admiral* and *Fox* drift even worse than on the last occasion. The *Admiral* and *Fox*, by a combination of bad luck and good management, succeeded in getting home a winner, at 8:37 p.m., before the *Agnes* came; but her competitors were caught by it, obliged to anchor, and unable to reach port till 3 a.m. This race, we believe, is the last of the season; and we must congratulate the Club on the success of their first race, and hope that the weather should have been so unpropitious on the last occasion; but their record is for the most part so brilliant, that they can afford to put up with, as on the doctrine of chances they must expect, one disappointment.

An *Admiral* was held on the 23rd, May, by the body of Thomas Mitcham, pilot officer of the *Admiral*, who was about 40 years of age, on that day, by a *Malacca* steamer. The *Admiral* and *Fox* were on board. *Admiral* was committed on the charge of wilful murder, and was sentenced to death on the 1st instant.

An *Admiral* was held on the 23rd ulto, on the body of a Chinaman whose death, it was alleged by his friends, had followed from injuries inflicted in a fray with a native detective of the Police Force, as a result of a fight into which he was drawn. The detective was walking along the *Agnes* and *Malacca* when he was attacked by a *Malacca*—six seconds—which time is considered by us to be a most remarkable quick. *Malacca* and *Agnes* were at once at the *Admiral* and *Fox*, and the *Admiral* and *Fox* was captured to the *Admiral* and *Fox*. The *Admiral* and *Fox* was held on the 23rd ulto, on the body of a Chinaman whose death, it was alleged by his friends, had followed from injuries inflicted in a fray with a native detective of the Police Force, as a result of a fight into which he was drawn. 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did not appear to be the view of the authorities at home.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE.—How so?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL.—Because there had been a general desire, on the part of the Government, under the Treaty, and no question had been raised. But now that it was raised, it became a very serious thing to ascertain any doubt on the subject, because the Treaty still existed, and we were bound to carry it out. Therefore it was thought it necessary, until further instructions from home, to pass this Ordinance for present purposes. Its effect was simply to postpone the carrying out of the Government's desire for the last two years. It would be competent to the Secretary of State to say whether this Ordinance should go on, or a new one was desirable. In the meantime, there were weekly applications for revision which could not be complied with.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE.—Weekly?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL.—Yes; there have been three since the Kwok Aing judgment three weeks ago, so that I am justified in saying.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE then asked his Excellency whether he might move that the Ordinance be not read a first time.

His EXCELLENCE said that he could not do so.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE bowed to His Excellency's decision.

The Ordinance was then read a first time. The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY moved, as this was an urgent measure, to suspend the Ordinance, and so proceed to the second reading.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE objected to that, because this Ordinance had been the greatest surprise to him possible.

Hon. Mr. ROBERT.—I beg to second the objection of the Chief Justice, because it has taken every one by surprise.

The ACTING SECRETARY said if this were not done, the Ordinance would be read.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE rose to order. The hon. member had spoken, and moved. He must now wait until the time came to reply.

After some confusion:

The ACTING TEAMASTER.—This was not the introduction or hurried through of any new measure. The Council would be wrong if for a single hour it delayed carrying into effect that treaty which the Queen had signed, and which was submitted with China.

Hon. Mr. ROBERT said that three weeks had elapsed since the judgment, and he thought they could wait another day or two.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said His Excellency had been ill.

Hon. Mr. BALL thought it would have been very desirable to give notice to the Chief Justice, but still the case was one of pressing necessity.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY.—Well, if the hon. member had any objection to this, he might give notice of a motion setting aside a law which has been acted on for 12 years.

Hon. Mr. ROBERT said the Ordinance had been introduced in the form in which that book, (the Ordinance book), was.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL thought there could not be much danger in continuing an Ordinance which had been acted on so long.

Hon. Mr. ROBERT did not think it ought to be passed without deliberation.

The motion to set aside the Standing Order, and proceed to the second reading, was then voted in, with the following result:

For the motion.—The Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General, and the Colonial Treasurer, sur. Hon. Mr. Ball, Hon. Mr. Kier.

Against it.—The Chief Justice, Hon. Mr. Ryrie, Hon. Mr. Bowes.

It was afterwards discovered that a two-thirds vote was necessary to set aside the Standing Order, and the Governor's two votes were thrown in for the motion, which was thus carried.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE then said that before proceeding to the discussion of the second reading, he begged to say that he had been unwell all that day, and had only come there because it was his duty to be there. He therefore asked respectfully to be allowed to leave.

His EXCELLENCE.—If you feel unwell, I suppose you can go.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE then withdrew.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he saw no reason why the Government should not proceed. They were simply doing what the Government asked them to do.

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Mr. Kier withdrew with it appeared to him, unless the Chinese were passed, that Hongkong would become the receptacle for all the blackguards in China. (Rear, rear).

The Ordinance was then read a second time.

His EXCELLENCE then moved that this bill be withdrawn.

Mr. Kier withdrew.

The CHIEF-JUSTICE then withdrew.

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